

**Friendship Heights
Transportation Management District
Advisory Committee
November 9, 2010**

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Voting Members Present

Julie Davis	Somerset House Management Assn.
Joe Dixon	GEICO
William P. Farley (Chair)	Town of Somerset
Kerri Gates	The JBG Companies
Tiffany Gee (Vice Chair)	Chevy Chase Land Company
Cobey R. Kuff	Wisconsin Place
Bill McCloskey	Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
Robert Schwarzbart	Friendship Heights Village Council

Non-Voting Members Present

Ed Axler	M-NCPPC
Sandra L. Brecher	DOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services

TMD Staff Present

Nakengi Byrd	DOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
Jim Carlson	DOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services

Absent

David Glass	Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers
Chief Roy Gordon	Chevy Chase Village Police
Capt. Russell Hamill	Montgomery County Police
Kenneth Hartman	B-CC Services Center
Ann F. Lewis	Friendship Heights Village
Sheila Wilson	DOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services

Guests

Transcie Almonte	Montgomery College
Richard Bingham	B-CC Regional Services Center
Bob Joiner	The Agenda News
Greg Knoop	Oudens Knoop Knoop + Sachs Architects
Regina Laurienzo	Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
Douglas Weisburger	MC Department of Environmental Protection

Abbreviations used herein include:

ARRA=American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
DEP = MC Dept. of Environmental Protection
GSA = General Services Administration
LEED = Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design
LEED-EB = Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design – Existing Building

Item 1 & 2 – Introductions/Minutes Approval: Chair William Farley called the meeting to order. Members and guests introduced themselves.

Item 3 – Chair Comments: Mr. Farley requested a vote on the September and October minutes. Both sets of minutes were approved and seconded without changes.

Item 4 – Mr. Farley introduced guest **Douglas Weisburger**, Montgomery County Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP), to discuss the County's Green Business Certification Program.

Mr. Weisburger introduced the other guests present to give their respective views on the Green Business Certification Program: **Transcie Almonte**, Montgomery College, a partner in the certification program; **Greg Knoop**, Principal at Oudens Knoop Knoop + Sachs Architects, a Green Certified business; and **Regina Laurienzo**, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, also a partner in the certification program.

Mr. Weisburger presented an overview of the Green Business Certification program, saying the County had not started the program from scratch but looked west for models of other similar programs, such as California's Bay Area which established a green business certification program a decade ago. There were also programs in several other areas of the country. **Mr. Weisburger** said that future growth of green certification is looking certain; he has been getting calls from other states inquiring about Montgomery County's program.

Mr. Weisburger said the green business certification is not the same as LEED certification (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) but serves to complement LEED. LEED focuses on building and major systems; green business focuses on day-to-day operations and policies. There is overlap, however, especially when looking at LEED-Existing Building (LEED-EB) systems. Green business is mostly about behavioral change within existing buildings.

Montgomery College and the Montgomery County Chamber are two important partners of the Green Business Certification Program. The Chamber has been instrumental in promoting the program to its membership, cheerleading and getting business buy-in. Montgomery College serves as the training arm of the partnership; the College representative will talk about the courses offered and how the classes serve to bring green business practitioners up to speed.

Mr. Weisburger said that during the two-year startup for the program the County had received significant input from the business community, with several iterations of the program design. The business community provided its viewpoint all along the way. As a result of this process, businesses began to own and embrace the concept of the program. **Mr. Weisburger** said he believed the program has struck the right balance between accessibility and challenge to businesses in seeking green certification. Taking the necessary steps toward certification should require a business to 'stretch' its green performance; however, if there are only two applications a year, then accessibility is an issue.

Mr. Weisburger said the program was launched in December 2009 and there are already 22 businesses in the application queue. He stressed that the program is purely voluntary; it is not a compliance program, and the word 'compliance' is rarely used.

The initial focus is on office buildings, but there will be additional sectors added as the program matures and evolves. For example, there has been interest from the landscaping business community. Since there are about 300 such businesses in the County and they do significant work in the area of storm water management, it may be useful to expand the type of businesses that are targeted. Property management companies are also a possible area of interest.

There is a modest certification fee: \$250 for large businesses; \$100 for small businesses. There was some debate at the beginning about instituting a fee; however, businesses should feel they have a stake in the process. Re-certification is set for every two years. **Mr. Weisburger** noted also that the certification process is facility-specific; Chevy Chase Bank (now Capital One) must seek certification or re-certification for each of its separate branches.

Mr. Weisburger said stakeholders stressed early on that there should be a different standard for large and small businesses; and also separate standards for building owner-occupiers vs. tenants, who have less control over the building operations. He added that the program uses a third party for on-site verification, similar to other programs of this type. The outside verification ensures program integrity and also provides professional consultative assistance to the businesses.

Mr. Weisburger said stakeholders also stressed the need for clear program guidelines and benefits: provide a resource guide of some sort; why the program is important; why it is being implemented, what are the financial benefits, etc. Clicking an action on the online checklist connects to the appropriate resource guide for that item. There is a green business e-newsletter and a suggested reading list among other education resources available.

Mr. Weisburger said Maryland recently passed into law the creation of a new corporate entity: the Benefit Corporation, a new class of corporations required to create benefit for society as well as shareholders. Unlike traditional corporations, Benefit Corporations must by law create a material positive impact on society; consider how decisions affect employees, community and the environment; and publicly report their social and environmental performance using established third-party standards. **Mr. Weisburger** said the new type of corporate entity can be shielded from law suits by share holders who may question why a particular corporate decision is made (such as seeking green certification).

Mr. Weisburger noted that although the certification application has a list of 260 items, obviously a company does not have to do all 260 in order to be certified. The list is more of a menu, and lets applicants select the options that best fit their business and facility. There are choices within seven categories that promote a comprehensive approach to sustainability:

- Organizational Commitment
- Waste Reduction & Recycling
- Environmentally Responsible Purchasing
- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
- Efficient Runoff Management and Water Use
- Pollution Prevention
- Transportation and Travel

Each category is divided into three components:

- Policy – There should be high level support and written policies to ensure all are on the same page.
- Actions and Programs – The bulk of the items are in Actions and Programs.
- Performance Measurement – The program supplies participants with various measuring tools to measure success.

Mr. Weisburger said businesses are encouraged to innovate and suggest items outside of the 260 item checklist. There may be actions unique to a particular business but meets the spirit of the program. If approved, the strategy will be folded into the checklist for subsequent years. All actions are weighted equally on the application with one point each in order to level the playing field between large and small organizations. For example, setting a printer default to double sided printing has equal weight with installing a green roof. Tenants receive points for getting the property managers to implement actions. Each section asks the applicant to meet eight points out of 20; overall, if you're a tenant or small business you will be required to do 70 actions. A large

business with over 25 employees that owns and occupies a building is required to take 120 actions. **Mr. Weisburger** said that this seems like a lot, but many companies are already doing many of the things listed in the application. Most sections are cost-neutral, or can save money. There are other benefits - most businesses want the exposure; being certified enhances their reputation and offers a marketing and competitive advantage. In addition, customers and new hires are increasingly seeking information about company sustainability programs.

Mr. Weisburger said he would shine a light on green businesses. Certified businesses receive a listing in the Green Business Directory, a window decal, a certificate and access to the program logo. Certified companies were also highlighted during a Ride On bus advertising campaign, with 20 companies listed on the advertisement. The County's Public Information Office has done four green company profiles on cable television. That film is then edited for inclusion on the Green Business Certification web site (<http://mcgreenbiz.org>) and information is included in the e-newsletter. There is a lot of positive exposure for companies. Not all businesses receive that much exposure – just those that are significant or unique.

Montgomery College is the training partner in the certification effort. The college offers a three hour crash course in getting certified, held at the Montgomery County Chamber in Rockville. There is also a plan for more customized training in December, offered at the Pershing Drive Tenants Association. In the spring the college will also be offering a Sustainability Practitioner's Certificate, for those individuals seeking to develop skill sets for more strategic planning in the area of green certification.

Mr. Weisburger offered examples of the types of green strategies companies can adopt to save money:

- A small orthodontics firm in Friendship Heights (Hall Orthodontics) significantly reduced its paper and electricity costs;
- Montgomery County Chamber saved \$50,000 by reducing the size of its event program booklets at its various awards and recognition functions;
- Marriott Hotels is shifting to daylight office cleaning so lights can be switched off at night; projected savings is about \$100,000;
- Shulman Rogers (Gandal Pordy & Ecker) is 'virtualizing' its databases and expects to save \$12,500 a year.

Mr. Weisburger said it is not necessary for a property manager to receive separate certification – tenants can also be green certified. The idea is to achieve a successful collaborative effort. Tenant businesses can use the leverage of green certification to persuade building management to take additional green steps. For example, an employer can tell the building management that the company has a new policy to turn off lights, to turn off computers, to get rid of extra fax machines, etc., then the company can illustrate to the property manager how the company is saving on utility costs for the building. The property manager may then be persuaded to take additional steps, such as installing more energy efficient bulbs.

Mr. Weisburger said that the section Transportation and Travel offers a number of green strategies. He said the checklist includes most if not all of the strategies that the TMD actively promotes to businesses. **Mr. Weisburger** said he worked closely with Commuter Services Chief **Sande Brecher** to develop the Transportation and Travel checklist. Among the transportation items are promotion of the Guaranteed Ride Home program, Maryland Commuter Tax Credit, using the region's rideshare database, bike facilities, etc. It is an easy connection between these elements and the region's air quality.

Mr. Weisburger said the cost to a business to implement most of the green business items is probably more in terms of time than money; and some strategies save money, such as eliminating the bottled water in the office. Some strategies are very easy to implement, such as using Energy Star computer equipment, which have energy saving features, criteria governing the use of heavy metals and requirements related to recycling of electronic parts.

Mr. Weisburger concluded his Green Business Certification presentation and provided information on the new Sustainability Practitioner's Certificate. The semester-long course, Introduction to Environmental and Social Sustainability, will be available in the spring. It is an online 12-week course; the class will include the whole range of areas related to green business, including both its theoretical and the practical aspects. The purpose is to change the overall business culture and to build a sustainability action plan for that business. The action plan could be with the existing business that the student works for; or, the course also offers an optional four month apprenticeship with a business that may not be ready for a full time green manager or coordinator but would like to work with someone on a temporary basis to create an action plan.

Mr. Weisburger introduced **Transcie Almonte**, Montgomery College, to explain the College's training program. **Ms. Almonte** said that for the Sustainability Practitioner's Certificate a student could already be in a company who wants to put into place a green strategy, or, for the apprenticeship, the College is looking for businesses that want someone to assist them to move into sustainability. There is a two-hour recordable session online for each of the twelve weeks; it involves direct contact with an instructor online. There are three specialty areas: Sustainable Supply Chain; Green and Renewable Energy; and Green Marketing. The student has the option for the four month apprenticeship at the conclusion of the class work.

Julie Davis asked the cost of the program. **Ms. Almonte** said the 12-week online course is \$499, which is very affordable. The concentration track classes, 2-3 hours each, are in the range of \$50 to \$100. The crash course in getting certified is \$55.

Mr. Farley asked how the impact to the environment is measured. And, since many of the businesses in the program - such as Honest Tea, for example - have green practices already in place, they can be considered 'low hanging fruit.' How can other businesses be persuaded to join the effort? **Mr. Weisburger** said he believes a compelling case can be made to those businesses not already green, especially in the case of businesses that start asking to do business only with other green businesses. There are measuring tools online to show businesses the savings associated with green practices; buying used vs. new toner cartridges, for instance, is an easy calculation. **Mr. Weisburger** said in most instances companies have already started on the path to green practices; getting certified helps take them across the finish line.

Mr. Farley asked if the standards are steadily raised and additional measures required once a company is the program. **Mr. Weisburger** said there was a debate about how to deal with moving companies forward in the program, because the certification is really seen as a start and not an end point. At present the issue of moving beyond initial certification has been shelved, and will come naturally as the program matures. The program will need to be revised in three to five years; at that time it's possible the bar for certification will be raised. It would, however, be imprudent to raise it much higher. The County would work with stakeholders to achieve a realistic change in program goals.

Ms. Davis said several at the table represented communities in high rises or condominiums. Does this program have any applicability, or is there a separate program for residential communities? While there is a large business presence, most of the square footage in Friendship Heights is high rise residential buildings; primarily condominiums, but there are also several major apartment complexes. The Somerset Condominium Board, for instance, would be very interested in reducing its costs while helping the environment. **Ms. Davis** said the three Somerset buildings combined are already doing a lot to promote green practices, but the effort is ad hoc and not systematic, and there seems to be no overall County program to provide guidance or education in sustainability to residential communities.

Ms. Brecher said the condominium boards operate essentially as non-profit businesses. The certification is not limited to profit making entities. **Mr. Weisburger** agreed that non-profits can participate in the certification and that, while there is no 'official' certification for residential communities, the program can offer informal

guidance in establishing green practices. He added that the certification web site offers a large section on ‘green living’ which is applicable to residences. The County is also using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to create a Green Living web site. There is also additional information on the Department of Environmental Protection web site (www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dep).

Ms. Brecher asked why the Somerset Housing Management Association couldn’t separately apply for certification. **Ms. Davis** said she understood that SHMA could apply, but the morning’s presentation was focused only on businesses. **Ms. Davis** said there is not one overall entity managing the business decisions of the Somerset community; rather, each building had its own condo association and management policies. **Ms. Brecher** suggested, whether it was one entity or several, that the business organization in charge could still be part of the certification program. **Ms. Davis** agreed, but said the morning’s presentation was the first she had heard of the Green Business Certification program and it stressed only business entities, not residential communities. It is unclear how applicable the program is to residential communities.

Mr. Weisburger said the program was not designed initially with residential communities in mind; however, the program contains a useful set of actions an organization could take.

Tiffany Gee said it is similar to actions she has taken at the Chevy Chase Center to become a LEED certified building. There are measures that can be taken in landscaping, the type of soil used, etc; measures one can take on the outside that work back into the dwelling areas. Although condo associations cannot guide what an individual does in a dwelling, individuals themselves can do some things to promote sustainability.

Ms. Davis said it would be helpful if there was a web site for residences with links, suggestions, etc. **Mr. Weisburger** said such a site was under development.

Mr. Schwarzbart said that another action that could be taken in support of green strategy is the replanting and replacement of trees in urbanized areas. He said that he had observed, after living in New York City for a number of years, that one of the first signs of decline for a neighborhood was the disappearance of the trees. Therefore, the Green Certification Program should include, as an important component, some effort to encourage communities to replace trees.

Mr. Weisburger said that Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning (M-NCPPC) and the State of Maryland both offer a \$25 incentive to plant trees on private property. He agreed that, as an environmental action, planting trees is one of the more important things one can do – for storm water management and for mitigating heat.

Regina Laurienzo said that from the Montgomery County Chamber’s perspective, it was important to become a green certified business and also to partner with Montgomery College. She said it is becoming apparent that operating as a green business is becoming an economic imperative. Beginning in late 2009, with President Obama’s executive order (Executive Order 13514 on Federal Sustainability), the General Services Administration (GSA) has started to encourage all federal agencies to track the federal government’s greenhouse gas emissions; other businesses not normally interested in green issues, such as Wal-Mart and IBM, started greening their supply chains in response. Montgomery County is number two in the nation for small businesses that procure from the federal government, so the effect of the Executive Order is likely to be felt heavily here.

Ms. Laurienzo said it is important for businesses to stand out now as green businesses; down the road, these businesses as government contractors will be ahead of the game in tracking emissions, or have calculations at hand to supply to the government. The Montgomery County Chamber is a small business, with eight employees; there is very little control over their space, but they took the actions available to them to get certified. For example, the staff switched from bottled water to water in pitchers; the coffee maker, which ran all night, was put on a timer that a staff member brought from home.

Greg Knoop described the contrast between the large economic investment that an organization must make to be LEED certified – a \$40 million construction project; \$6 million in a photovoltaic or a wind energy array on a building; \$300,000 for an office suite renovation – vs. the steps that a small firm can take to be green certified. When people hear ‘LEED’ they think only a small number of businesses are engaged, primarily due to the investment cost. **Mr. Knoop** said that small business firms such as his (17 employees) are not out of the game due to their size or their project portfolio. He said there are ways to make a difference, citing the terms ‘lean’ and ‘green’ together; lean and green work together, such as in the need to cut down on office overhead. His company looks for ways to stay lean as a company because it needs to be competitive. Therefore, small things begin to matter, such as energy efficient light bulbs. Or, offices can be fitted with occupancy-sensor light switchers – this represents a small investment in both parts and labor. **Mr. Knoop** also cited using both sides of a sheet of paper, cutting printing costs and waste, or going paperless and using pdf documents – a signature can be saved into the pdf so there is no need for a paper copy. **Mr. Knoop** said his firm used to get a large volume of architectural drawings; now, they receive most documents in pdf format. He said his firm has also cut down on postage and UPS charges by relying more on the electronic format for document distribution. These changes allow the firm to be lean: to do the same job for less money and resource expenditure.

Mr. Knoop said the quality of a work place is important for resource conservation; for example, arranging work stations around daylight, which also makes employees happy. Good indoor air quality is also important – check to see if building management is changing the air filters on a regular basis; proper temperature control is also important. **Mr. Knoop** cited the waste involved in storing bottled water, and the energy savings realized by purchasing a newer refrigerator hooked to a water source with a filter. Absenteeism in the workplace often is related to the overall work environment, and is large business cost.

Mr. Knoop said the Green Business Certification can transform a business, provides a source of pride for employees and it helps the business gain access to the emerging green economy. The list of green strategies allows for the category “other” under every section, allowing a business to be creative in its certification.

Mr. Schwarzbart noted that although the concept of being green is a good one, there are instances in which it seems to be overdone or can have unintended consequences. For example, the drive to limit the use of plastic bags in grocery stores because they end up in the waterways has led to re-usable grocery bags which, in turn, may be exposing people to higher than usual numbers of bacteria because the bags are reused so often.

Mr. Knoop said that millions of the plastic bags were saved from ending up in the Anacostia River under DC’s new program; and the five cent tax saved millions of dollars for the city.

Mr. Schwarzbart said that paper use also still plays a large role in peoples’ lives. Although he receives the meeting minutes electronically, he still prefers to print them before reading. While the green program is worthwhile and certainly should be pursued, there are some things, such as newspapers or magazines that will continue to persist - they shouldn’t be destroyed because they are important to society and the way we do things. There are some old ways of doing things that still have utility.

Mr. Knoop noted that many changes are generational, such as the transition to ‘ebooks’ and away from paper printing for many publications. This is leading to the demise of brick and mortar stores such as Borders. He said the e-book readers offer features such as font adjustment and backlit screens, making them very versatile. **Mr. Knoop** said print media has had an ecological impact in his office. For example, architects generally find their way onto the mailing lists of most architectural publications; and, in an office with several architects this usually means the office receives large numbers of such publications. When the office called the publications in an effort to receive just one magazine, the subscriptions doubled. The circulation is driven not by the quality of the publication but by advertising space and the need to put magazine on a lot of doorsteps.

Mr. Schwarzbart said one problem with e-books or e-readers is that, to the extent they destroy traditional bookstores, they tend to destroy a little bit of our civilization. Bookstores are cultural centers; e-readers, as useful as they are, are also somewhat 'bloodless'. There is a real value to being able to go to a bookstore like Politics and Prose, for example. We have seen in our time the independent bookstores going out and we are the poorer for it. We cannot block progress, but we must be cognizant of what we are losing at the same time.

Mr. Knoop commented on the large carbon footprint of the e-book, which is made of many highly refined and processed materials; some of the processes are toxic or can produce toxic by-products. Mr. Knoop used the analogy of the Prius, which takes about 22 years to 'pay off' its carbon footprint; whereas, one could continue to drive an older car and produce a smaller footprint. Gas savings from the Prius may be immediate, but there are other issues related to manufacturing which produce carbon emissions.

Mr. Farley asked if the certification process includes alternative energy sources, such as wind or solar power. **Mr. Weisburger** said there is no wind element, but photovoltaic elements are included; and participants can purchase power from clean sources or participate in buying aggregate power from a remote source; one example is Clean Currents, a Montgomery County company, which can broker power purchases from clean sources.

Mr. Weisburger added, in response to a question from **Mr. McCloskey**, that the County is also beginning to adopt many of the measures in the certification program. He expects to adapt the measures for the government but has not set a specific date. **Ms. Brecher** noted that the County is of course doing many of the things on the certification list, such as default double sided printing, using much less paper, installing motion activated light sensors in government buildings, etc. The Commuter Services office reuses all out of date pre-printed stationery for note pads and recycled printed materials.

Mr. Weisburger said all County office buildings (new construction) are to be LEED Silver certified; private buildings can be LEED Standard, so the County has set a higher bar for public buildings. Thirty percent of the energy purchased must be from clean energy source; Montgomery County is eighth in the nation in the purchase of clean energy.

Mr. Weisburger said, in response to a question from **Mr. Farley** regarding nuclear energy, that although that option to purchase nuclear as a clean energy is not currently on the certification list, it could potentially be added if such a case should come up.

Ms. Brecher said that even though there are larger issues to consider in questions regarding nuclear energy or other broader areas, there is no question that the efforts of the TMD are focused on making the County greener by getting people out of their cars and into mass transit. The TMD is not conflicted in its mission, and that is what is built into the transportation elements of the Green Business Certification program.

Richard Bingham, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Center, asked what the County does with all of the recycle bins. **Mr. Bingham** managed a building for a number of years and discovered the cleaning crew was dumping them in the trash. Who is responsible for the County buildings and for delivering the material in the recycling bins to the proper location? **Mr. Weisburger** said he has heard similar complaints about improper disposal of recycled material. He said he would discuss the matter with **Mr. Bingham** after the meeting.

Item 5 – Updates: **Ms. Brecher** had two updates:

As of December 31, the tax-free transit subsidy of \$230 that an employer can provide an employee, and which had reached parity with the parking benefit, will revert back to its previous pre-stimulus level of \$120 (or \$130 if pegged to the Consumer Price Index as before). The stimulus legislation had a sunset clause of 2011; unless Congress acts to extend it, it will end January 1. **Ms. Brecher** encouraged members to write their representatives regarding the negative impact this will have on transit use.

Ms. Brecher announced that the County did not receive the TIGER II grant for bike sharing, which would have linked up to the regional bike sharing network already in place in DC and Arlington. The County is optimistic that an alternative funding source can be secured.

Mr. Farley thanked the guests for attending the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM
Next meeting date: December 14, 2010